

KVRI Grizzly Bear Subcommittee Meeting
November 19th, 2020 1:15 PM
via Zoom

In Attendance:

Rhonda Vogl, KVRI Facilitator & Kootenai Tribe of Idaho (KTOI)
Scott Soultz, KTOI
Brad Smith, Idaho Conservation League
Carol Kriebs, KTOI
Christy Johnson-Hughes, Fish and Wildlife
Mitch Doherty, Vital Ground
Evan DeHamer, Idaho Fish and Game
Todd Hagens, Idaho Water Rights
Darcy Lammers, Private Landowner
Brett Lyndaker, US Forest Service
Merritt Horsman, Idaho Fish & Game
Wayne Kasworm, US Fish and Wildlife
Brandon Diller, KTOI
Brittany Morlin US Fish and Wildlife
Laura Jungst, US Forest Service
Jesse Grossman, Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative
Norm Merz, Idaho Fish & Game
Brian Johnson, Idaho Fish & Game
Jeff Gilberg, Private Landowner
Stefani Bales, Representative Senator Risch's Office
Karen Schumacher, KVRI Recording Secretary and KTOI

Rhonda Vogl opened the meeting and asked for introductions by name.

Community Notification Process (Nixle) Updates

Scott Soultz reviewed ideas for an ad and postings on KVRI facebook page and website:

- Nixle information
- Information on what food attractants are
- Possibly other postings/articles to inform and engage

It was agreed that Scott would outline the ad and have it ready for committee review before spring when bears are coming out and looking for food. The importance of letting people know that Nixle works with email in the event you are not in a cell service area was emphasized.

Brian Johnson shared that he had no updates as things had been quiet since the last meeting.

Opportunities for online public outreach – Scott Soultz pointed out that the KVRI website and facebook page were opportunities for reaching community members. He introduced Mitch Doherty of Vital Ground.

Mitch talked about the use of the website: [Missoula Bear Alerts, Montana Bear Management Education \(missoulabears.org\)](http://MissoulaBearAlerts.org) that provides bear (and other animal) sightings and information that is fed into a facebook page. He shared that this is a passive way for information to be shared and that the FB page does need to be monitored for unsolicited or ill

meant information. Website manager – **James Jonkel** MFWP Wildlife Management Specialist gets on for about 15 min every 2 weeks with information and posts to the website that reads to facebook.

Mitch shared that he was not sure where the funding comes from exactly, but interested folks should inquire with Hilary Cooley, USFWS Grizzly Bear Recovery Coordinator.

Human Bear Conflict – Jesse Grossman and Laura Jungst began the program there 3 years ago out of the Three Rivers Ranger District as a forest service lands specific effort to reach out and increase education as a result of the increasing population and recreation use of lands. 2019 - Started small with a seasonal employee, 2 days a week, hiking into back country spots and talking directly with people there.

2020 – through funds from IGBC and Y2Y they were able to have a full-time season employee for 60 days and the program grew substantially.

- Contacts were made
 - Biologists
 - Forest Service Personnel
- Gathered more data on the number and variety of people using areas
- Found a high interest for use of bear spray
 - People who had never used and did not carry
 - People who had bear spray but were unsure how to use
 - 95% had never sprayed
- Walked and drove through both back and front country sites
 - Used Green and Red cards to inform/educate on food storage
 - Green – Kudos – good job using correct food storage
 - Red – Oops – there's some problems with the way you are string food
- Noted a desire for having some sort of law enforcement available for backup.
- Felt the position was helpful and would like to continue having it.

Discussed various ways person in agency interacted with the public for outreach.

Storage options needed for backcountry (what if there are no trees e.g.)

The pros and cons of metal boxes versus poles.

- Boxes
 - Hard to transport
 - Effective against bear intrusion
 - Results in periodic use as a trash receptacle
- Poles
 - Easy to transport in
 - May not be useful when ground has rocks
 - Needs to be inserted deep into ground to hold

Bear Spray was discussed and ideas for promoting/funding

Community Liaison

There was not a formal presentation or agenda for this discussion.

Ideas were shared about the importance of identifying what agency would be responsible for a community liaison person. It was agreed that funding would be challenging until the role of the person and where they would report to was identified.

Wayne Kasworm stated that Idaho Office of the Fish and Wildlife has provided a grant to Idaho Fish and Game for 45K for the next 2 years for a North Idaho Bear Specialist position. He stated it was up to Idaho Fish and Game to determine how this position would be structured.

USFWS Grizzly Bear Funding Opportunities

1) Support an IDFG Conservation Officer for 2 years to assist with bear/human conflicts and education. Funding was provided through the Grizzly Bear Recovery Office to IDFG.

2) \$15,000 for Boundary County/KVRI to assist with information and education. This may include signs, fencing, bear spray workshops, etc. We are looking for a proposal from either the Boundary County Commissioners or KRVI with projects to reduce grizzly bear/human conflicts.

3) Partners for Fish and Wildlife projects/NRCS funding opportunities. I would like our Partners program to do a presentation on their funding opportunities and current projects in north Idaho. I would like to add more grizzly bear-related projects to our portfolio, such as habitat-oriented projects, maybe some fencing, migration habitat, etc.

All of this needs to be done in partnership with KVRI and landowners. The only item that has been finalized is the funding for the Conservation Officer. Otherwise, she is asking for help identifying the highest priority needs we can help with in north Idaho.

Brittany Morlin of US Fish and Wildlife was introduced and Christy explained that she is working with them to create a strategy to bring in partners for F & W programs to explore funding other avenues such as large game migration, Secretarial order 3362, so when we benefit elk habitat, we would benefit grizzly bear. They are looking forward to engaging more

Christy requested to be added to the subcommittee list in order to keep-up and stay involved.

Brittany shared her role in the Private Lands Program and outlined their goals to provide financial and technical assistance to private landowners as well as efforts with threatened and endangered species and State priority species.

USFWS funds for on the ground restoration efforts compliment some of the human bear conflict needs. The agency is looking to be creative. Brittany is looking forward to having more discussions and felt it is great to have a central hub; an entity that the community can go to with questions.

Scott referred to Evan D. chat regarding the idea of inexpensive Bear Be Aware carabiners – great idea. He also suggested perhaps also having a branded bear spray holster.

Rhonda asked for Darcy Lammer's input. He wondered if the funding discussed could look at a model in Montana being used that incorporates a joint venture between Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks with the Forest Service. He said it was a cost share model that allowed for a variety of activities to be covered by the hired person. Wondering if this possibility could possibly be replicated in North Idaho. He referred to the wilderness institute out of the University of Montana

Refuse areas in Boundary County

Brian Johnson discussed three transfer stations and the main city refuge

Paradise Valley - Complete and secure. Done for Black Bear
Naples - ½ fenced
Mt. Hall – ½ fenced
Main refuge - Not fenced at all

Jesse Grossman stated funding is available to secure Mt. Hall transfer station. Brian Johnson is taking the lead on that project. Brian is working with the sanitation department. Asked if there is an interest to prioritize the other transfer station and main dump, these types of projects can result in funding in one or two years with coordination between nonprofit partners.

Brian stated that the Mt. Hall status is actually on state property. The county is interested in fencing but the state is considering moving the site a short distance away. We are waiting on that decision.

Darcy Lammers had a question regarding the position being developed. He asked how that position was going to benefit land and livestock owners. He had heard a lot about recreation and supports that, but felt the opportunity shouldn't be missed for helping out land/livestock owners.

Brian shared that although the details are still being ironed out, the focus will be with landowners in the valley. That will be the emphasis. Wayne Kasworm agreed with Brian. Rhonda supported Darcy offering input and representing our community landowners. Christy echoed the importance of all agencies working together and the great ideas that are the result of those conversations. Rhonda concluded the meeting with gratitude of funding and the input from all at the meeting.